

Los Angeles County Probation Oversight Working Group

Working Document of Recommendations, version 6-22-16

1. We need to streamline the process by which oversight bodies request information from Probation to avoid duplication and the unnecessary expenditure of Probation time and resources spent responding to multiple agencies, generating reports, and repetitive questions. There should be a mechanism by which one oversight body compiles inquiries and requests for information; receives information and reports from all citizen oversight or advocacy groups; evaluates information; and, synthesizes duplicative requests and/or repetitive concerns. This oversight body should be the sole oversight entity to which Probation must respond with requests for information. Such streamlining might also save County resources.
  - a. This entity would streamline the flow of information/ reports/ recommendations into a comprehensive system that addresses and responds to concerns. This entity would ensure a process by which corrective actions are followed and monitored by citizen oversight groups on an ongoing basis.
  - b. If deficiencies continue or Probation shows a lack of responsiveness, this entity will have direct access to the BOS.
  - c. This entity must have sufficient authority or “teeth” - perhaps even the ability to weigh in on Probation’s budget requests prior to approval.
  - d. This entity must have a meaningful enforcement mechanism to hold the Probation Department accountable.
  - e. This body would report back directly to the BOS.
2. There needs to be a process by which the comprehensive oversight entity can respond in a timely fashion (or generate a timely response from the appropriate party) to concerns and issues raised. Several existing oversight bodies currently face constraints that prohibit the ability a timely response (e.g., being limited to the “power of the pen” or the ability to generate an annual report as a response).
3. There is a need for better communication between probation oversight entities. The lack of coordination and clear lines of communication makes the department susceptible to critiques, and even lawsuits.

4. LA County should have database where all reports are catalogued, and status updates on corrective actions plans, inspection reports, etc. are maintained. This database should include links to the various reports and be available and easily accessible by the public, county departments, citizen oversight entities, advocacy groups, etc. to promote transparency.
5. This comprehensive oversight body should review the mission and directive for other entities that have oversight responsibilities for Probation, and include reporting responsibilities and the chain of command based on the entity's actual role and responsibilities, as well as the roles and responsibilities dictated by the BOS or state statute.
6. This group should take special care to clarify the role (and overlap) between Probation and LACOE.
7. The CERC quarterly report (corrective actions plans and recommendations, including follow-up) may be a model for other entities to utilize to stay current with respect to various issues, actions, recommendations, and status updates. This process was just changed for juveniles, and might be replicated on the adult side (where it currently does not exist), as well.
8. There should be a separate clearance process for VISTO (volunteers and interns) from Human Resources Employment processing/clearance.
9. There must be special protections for transition age youth (TAY) – ages 16 – 24 – within the Probation Department. Such protection might come in the form of a special TAY division within the Department.
10. Capital Improvements should be included as a part of ongoing oversight.